



NEWARK HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

CITY HALL, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102 • ROOM 214 • 643-6300 Ext. 281

HUGH J. ADDONIZIO, Mayor

JAMES I. THREATT, Executive Director

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August 7, 1967

Honorable Arthur J. Sills
Attorney General
State of New Jersey
Trenton, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Sills:

I think that it is important to bring to your attention a few of the many cases and all the facts pertaining to the activities of the N. J. State Police during the recent tragic turmoil in the city of Newark.

You have stated publicly that:

"It is hard to believe that any brutality charges on the part of the State Police could be true."

"I will not stand behind any State Policeman who has been guilty of brutality."

I find it difficult to understand your prejudging the issue of State Police brutality before any of the investigations into the matter have been completed. It is time your office became aware of the fact that some State Police did practice brutality against many of Newark's citizens. This tragic reality resulted in death, injury and the destruction of property to many individuals.

You have stated that for any organization to seek information on this issue would be, in effect, inciting the citizenry. Nothing could be more remote from the truth.

To sweep under a rug, deny or whitewash this issue will do more to sustain tensions in our community than to place it out in the open where it can be resolved. The public expects this to be done. I certainly hope the faith that we have in your office will not be shaken.

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The Newark Human Rights Commission has as one of its functions:

" Receive and investigate complaints and institute investigations of racial, religious and ethnic group tensions, prejudice, intolerance, bigotry and discrimination and any breach of the peace or disorder occasioned thereby.

... to make such investigation and studies in any field of human relationship as in the judgement of the Commission will aid in effectuating its general purpose. . .

The following incidents are just a few of many cases (all documented) that our Commission is ready to turn over to your office upon request.

1. Residents of Beacon Street (76 in all) in a signed petition were eye-witnesses to the State Police actions on Friday, July 14, 1967 at approximately 5:30 P. M., at which time, without warning or provocation sprayed the street from left to right, near Springfield Avenue; shot James Snead, age 36, in the stomach as he was making repairs on his car. Karl Green, age 17, was shot in the head as he stood on his sister's porch at 55 Beacon Street.

2. John Thomas, founder of Crispus Attucks Day, Car stopped at Watson and Bergen Sts. was searched, beaten and released.

3. Mrs. Holsey McGuire, 300 Hunterdon St. State Police kicked down doors. Shot up 3rd. floor apartment including furniture looking for sniper. Women were taken out of house and told to lie on ground in front of house. 13 year old son of Rev. Leverett (neighbor) came out of his house. Police cut his pants off.

4. Mrs. Lewis, #2 Stratford Place, Apt. #502 was shot up. Why would a Trooper shoot up furniture looking for a sniper.

5. The death of James W. Rutledge, Jr. at Jo-Rae's Music Room, at Bergen and Custer Streets. According to Orlando K. Perry, director of Perry Funeral Home, 39 rifle wounds were counted as he prepared the body for burial. This brutal, sadistic attack is self explanatory.

The following incidents that took place against Negro owned businesses followed a deliberate pattern. State Police (in some cases assisted by National Guardsmen) sprayed the establishment with bullets; then took their rifle butts and smashed the remaining glass left in the shattered windows.

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1. Back Room Tavern, 132 Orchard St. Mrs. Johnnie Ishmael, 7/13/67
2. Confectionary Store, Jelester Richardson, 799 South 18th. St.
3. King-Nes Cleaners & Dyers, 473 Avon Ave. (State Police car numbers)
4. Steve Thomas, Insurance Broker, 580 Clinton Ave.
5. Cecil Hewitt, Insurance Broker, 572 Clinton Ave.
6. Callendor Real Estate, 568 Springfield Ave.
7. Eddie Hardy, Dress Shop, 570 Clinton Ave.
8. Nancy Fergenson, Furniture and Appliances, 997 Bergen St., (She was in store)
9. 459 Club, 459 - 15th. Ave.
10. Earl Harris, Restaurant, Elizabeth Ave.

These are just a few of many cases that the citizens of Newark will expect your office to investigate with all deliberate speed.

Sincerely yours,

Albert Black

ALBERT BLACK
CHAIRMAN

AB/hn

cc. Hon. Richard Hughes
Colonel Kelly, New Jersey State Police

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